

REMARKS

This Amendment is responsive to the official action dated October 5, 2007. Claims 1-20 were pending in the application. In the official action, claims 1-20 were rejected. In this Amendment, claims 1 and 20 have been amended. Claims 1-20 thus remain for consideration.

Applicants submit that claims 1-20 are in condition for allowance and request withdrawal of the rejections in light of the following remarks.

Drawings

The objection to the drawings is noted and corrected in accordance with the replacement drawing sheets accompanying this Amendment.

Applicants have provided replacement drawing sheets including Figs. 1-3, 5, 6, and 15 for the corresponding previously filed drawing sheets. The replacement sheets amend Figs. 1-3, 5, 6, and 15 by inserting the label "Prior Art" for each figure.

Accordingly, Applicants submit that the drawings are now in compliance with all formality requirements, and request that the objection to the drawings be withdrawn.

Specification

The disclosure was objected to because of informalities.

The disclosure has been amended to correct for the informalities. Accordingly, Applicants request that that the objection to the specification be withdrawn.

Double Patenting

Claims 1, 2, 10, and 11 were provisionally rejected under 35 U.S.C. §101 as claiming the same invention as that of claims 2 and 4 of copending Application No. 10/706,772.

Applicants submit that claims 1, 2, 10, and 11 claim an invention that is different from the invention claimed in claims 2 and 4 of copending Application No. 10/706,772. For example, claims 1, 2, 10, and 11 recite that "a low-pass filter characteristic will be given to a synthesis response of the audio signal at a second point in the sound field," and claims 2 and 4 of the copending application do not include such recitation. Accordingly, Applicants request that the provisional double patenting rejections be withdrawn.

§102 Rejections

Claims 1-4 and 10-13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Bienek et al. (WO 02/078388 A2).

Claims 5-9 and 14-20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Bienek in view of Masako et al. (JP-8-191225-A).

Applicants submit that the independent claims (claims 1 and 10) are patentable over Bienek and Masako.

Applicants' invention as recited in the independent claims is directed toward an audio signal processing method and an audio signal processor. Each of the claims recites that an audio signal is supplied to a plurality of digital filters, and that the plurality of digital filters is provided with an amplitude characteristic "so that a low-pass filter characteristic will be given to a synthesis response of the audio signal at a [point] in [a] sound field without combining separately filtered frequency bands of the audio signal."

Neither Bienek nor Masako discloses the recitation of imparting a low-pass filter characteristic to a synthesis response at a point in a sound field without combining separately filtered frequency bands of the audio signal. In particular, Applicants note that Bienek's "Third Aspect of the Invention" discloses applying different "window functions" (or

"filter amplitude characteristics") to a multiple of channels of an audio signal. (Bienek page 26 line 18 - page 27 line 26; and Figs. 11A-11D) For example, a window function imparting relatively high directivity is applied to a channel having relatively little bass content and a window function imparting relatively low directivity is applied to a channel having relatively large bass content. However, applying window functions in this manner does not impart a low pass characteristic to any one channel at any point in a sound field. That is, Bienek's scheme of varying window functions on a channel-by-channel basis does not change the frequency characteristics of the synthesis response for any one of the channels, but rather, varies the directivity of the channels on a channel-by-channel basis.

Accordingly, Applicants believe that claims 1 and 10 are patentable over Bienek and Masako based at least on the failure of Bienek and Masako to disclose Applicants' "low-pass filter characteristic" recitation.

Further, since dependent claims inherit the limitations of their respective base claims, Applicants believe that dependent claims 2-9 and 11-20 are patentable over Bienek and Masako for at least the same reasons as discussed in connection with claims 1 and 10.

Applicants respectfully submit that all of the claims now pending in the application are in condition for allowance, which action is earnestly solicited. If any issues remain, or if the Examiner has any further suggestions, he/she is invited to telephone the undersigned at (908) 654-5000.

Application No.: 10/533,612

Docket No.: SONYJP 3.3-1024

The Examiner is hereby authorized to charge any insufficient fees or credit any overpayment associated with the above-identified application to Deposit Account No. 12-1095.

The Examiner's consideration of this matter is gratefully acknowledged.

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Respectfully submitted,

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